

the author observes, has been probably based on an individual variety. The plate annexed represents the typical form of *Stringops* and various details.

Part 4 (price 2s. 11d.), also by Count Salvadori, contains the Nestoridae of New Zealand, consisting of the single genus *Nestor*. The author recognises six species of this curious form. The plate represents *Nestor septentrionalis* and details of other species.

Part 5 (price 6s.), also by Count Salvadori, relates to the Cacatuidæ, which are divided into two subfamilies—Cacatuinae and Calopsittacinæ. In the first of these the author recognises five genera with 26 species altogether. The second subfamily contains only one species, *Calopsittacus novæ-hollandiæ*.

Two excellent coloured plates represent *Cacatua goffini*, *Calopsittacus novæ-hollandiæ*, and various details.

XII.—Letters, Notes, Extracts, &c.

WE have received the following letters addressed to "The Editors of 'The Ibis'":—

SIRs,—It may interest the readers of 'The Ibis' to learn that I have lately had the opportunity of examining a specimen of the rare Albatros described by Salvin in 1896 as *Thalassogeron layardi* (Cat. B. xxv. p. 450), of which, so far as I am aware, but one example is yet known. The specimen in question was obtained by the late Mr. J. O. Marais off the Knysna Heads, on the eastern coast of the Colony, on the 28th of August, 1899, and was acquired, with other birds collected by the same gentleman, by the Pretoria Museum. Dr. Gunning, at my request, has kindly allowed me to examine it, and I find it to agree well with the description and measurements of the type in the British Museum as given by Salvin.

If the genus *Thalassogeron* is to be maintained (of which Mr. Reithschild has lately expressed some doubt—see Bull.

B. O. C. xv. p. 15), *Thalassogeron layardi* will certainly belong to it, being closely allied to *T. cautus*, and shewing the membranous band of soft skin which separates the culminicorn from the latericorn and is characteristic of that group.

The new specimen of *T. layardi* is labelled "male" and appears to be quite adult.

South African Museum,
Cape Town,
September 20th, 1905.

I am, Sirs, yours &c.,
W. L. SCLATER.

[If Mr. Sclater will look at the last number of 'The Ibis' (which he had not seen when he wrote his letter) he will find (p. 559) that it has now been decided by Mr. Ogilvie-Grant and Mr. Rothschild that *Thalassogeron layardi* is the same as *Diomedea cauta* of Gould, described in 1840, and must therefore bear the latter name. It is of great interest to have a second record of this fine Albatros on the South-African coast.—EDD.]

SIRS,—You may like to hear that all is now well with our Expedition. We have had a good journey up here from Port Lamy—quite an easy one after the Lake-Chad troubles. We are leaving to-day to explore the Ba-mingui, but the country (formerly the happy hunting-grounds of Rabe and Senoussi) is now uninhabited, so that the food-supply will be a difficult question. We hope, at present, to get up the river for five days' journey and then return to our base here, whence we may proceed to Yakoma on the Ubanghi. I have not heard from England for a long time, but I have received rumours that the fishes of the Expedition sent home have turned out well.

My bird-collection now numbers nearly 1400 specimens. I have met with some very interesting species. I hear that the doctor with the Chevalier Expedition collected Birds. I hope that his array was not a formidable one. My birds have not been sent to the British Museum, as you know my

liking to learn something for myself about what I have collected. I hope when I return to be able to shew you some interesting specimens. Another ten months should see the Expedition finished, if all goes well.

My Portuguese collector has been most useful. What with the transport and the various collections, he has had his hands full. Birgimi is a poor country; the villages on this fine river are few and far between. There is no native traffic of any kind. The Sultan of Wadai has again been giving trouble, and this makes any entrance into his dominions impossible. On this account we have had to give up our journey to Lake Fittsi.

Irene,
Near R. Ba-mingui,
August 8th, 1905.

Yours &c.,
BOYD ALEXANDER.

[We are informed that Irene, or Irena, is in about 8° N. lat. and 18° E. long., on the Shari, of which the Ba-mingui is one of the principal tributaries.—EDD.]

SIRS,—I am writing a line to tell you that we have arrived at Las Palmas, where we coal. As we shall only be here a day or two, I shall not be able to do much in the way of collecting. We go on to St. Paul's Rocks, then to Bahia (to coal), and thence to South Trinidad, where I hope to get some good Petrels. After that we proceed to Tristan d'Acunha, Inaccessible Island, and Gough Island, and from the last island to Cape Town, where we get our first mail. I have seen only the usual sea-birds at present. Two days out from England a Willow-Wren and a Robin came on board, and the following day a Stock-Dove. I will write again from Bahia.

'Valhalla,' R.Y.S.,
November 12th, 1905,
Las Palmas.

Yours &c.,
MICHAEL J. NICOLL.

SIRS,—Col. Godwin-Austen's notice of my old friend, William Blanford, in the last number of 'The Ibis' leaves little to be desired, but I think that a few lines on our journey together in Sikkim may be of interest, as it has considerable bearing on our present knowledge of the district*.

Probably no one, alive or dead, has ever had such a wide personal knowledge of the physical, geological, and zoological features of British India as Blanford, and no man has written on these subjects with a clearer and sounder perception of the geographical distribution of the birds, mammals, reptiles, and land-shells. Though apparently not a man of robust constitution, he had passed twenty-five years of his life in the most unhealthy parts of India, and, as I can personally testify, was a very hard man to tire. I first met him in Sikkim in 1870, when he joined me in an expedition which I had planned to the Tibetan frontier. This district had not been visited since Sir Joseph Hooker and Dr. Campbell had been made prisoners by the Sikkim Rajah twenty-two years before. The whole of this journey was done on foot, and we calculated that during the course of ten weeks we had ascended about 115,000 feet at elevations of from 1000 to 19,000 feet. But though we discovered the Jelap La Pass, which, until the late military expedition to Lhasa, was the chief trade-route between Sikkim and Tibet, we failed, owing to native opposition, to get beyond the sources of the Tista River, or to reach the home of the great Tibetan stag. I consider that it was largely owing to Blanford's knowledge of the native character and language, and his tact in dealing with the Tibetans, that we were able to do what we did without serious results; for more than once our anxiety to cross the frontier led to friction with the guards that might easily have ended in violence if they had not been impressed by the great firmness of his character. For though Blanford was no blusterer, he had a great deal of

* [This letter was originally received in the form of an obituarial notice, but, as that of Col. Godwin-Austen had been previously accepted, Mr. Elwes has kindly made the necessary alterations.--EDD.]

determination and was not easily daunted by the difficulty of the country or the persistent opposition with which we met. During the whole of this expedition I lived with Blanford in one small tent, constantly wet, and we both did harder work than we had ever done before or have done since; and though my education, surroundings, and tastes, apart from our common love of Natural History, had been extremely different from his, yet I can truthfully say that we never had an unpleasant word, and that a better companion in dangers and hardships no man could have. This journey, which was inspired by Sir Joseph Hooker's 'Himalayan Journals,' and this association with a naturalist of the first rank had a great influence upon much of my future work, and though, when Blanford returned to England, married, and settled in London, our respective avocations did not bring us much together, I always considered him and the late Osbert Salvin my best zoological advisers.

Blanford was all his life a hard worker, and the scientific papers published by him between 1852 and 1901 (of which a list is given in the 'Geological Magazine' for Jan. 1905, with a portrait) number 150, including 22 on ornithology. These make a worthy record of his very varied experience, and might form the groundwork of a most interesting biography.

As Editor of the series of works on the Fauna of British India, published by Government, he was unrivalled, and will be very hard to replace. His official work in these various spheres was somewhat tardily recognised by the Companionship of the Indian Empire, which is often given, at an earlier period in life, to men who have not a tenth part of his distinction. But the Royal Medal of the Royal Society and the Wollaston Medal of the Geological Society were probably more highly valued by him, and his memory will long remain honoured by all who knew him.

Yours &c.,

H. J. ELWES.

Mr. Howard Saunders requests us to publish the following letter, which he has received from Dr. Victor Fatio :—

CHER MONSIEUR,—En vous réitérant mes remerciements pour l'aimable article que vous avez bien voulu publier dans 'l'Ibis' (1905, pp. 120-122), sur la seconde partie du volume des Oiseaux de ma 'Faune des Vertébrés de la Suisse,' je désire répondre en deux mots à quelques observations que vous fîtes alors, en suivant une à une vos remarques, dans l'ordre où vous les avez enregistrées vous-même. Pardonnez-moi de revenir si tardivement sur des questions auxquelles, comme je vous l'ai écrit déjà, des circonstances indépendantes de ma volonté m'ont empêché de donner plus tôt réponse

Ainsi que je l'ai dit, en tête du premier volume de ma Faune suisse, en 1869, je me suis imposé de douter généralement de ce que je n'avais pas vu, jusqu'à plus ample informé. En outre, comme je l'ai dit aussi, dans l'introduction à mon dernier volume paru (Oiseaux, part. 2, 1904), j'ai décrit, autant que possible, les espèces du pays, nicheuses et sédentaires surtout, sur des sujets de provenance suisse, pour ne pas faire une pure compilation et pour conserver à mon ouvrage son caractère particulier.

Si je n'ai pas parlé des représentants du genre *Porphyrio*, c'est que, ainsi que je l'ai signalé (vol. ii. part. 2, p. 1151), celui-ci nous fait jusqu'ici défaut, bien qu'un individu du *P. caesus* ait été tué en Savoie, près de Chambéry, le 15 août 1833, selon Bailly, Ornith. Savoie, iv. p. 270, en 1854.

Quant à mon silence sur le Waldrapp de Gesner, il résulte simplement du fait que je crois à quelque erreur ou confusion de la part du célèbre naturaliste du XVI^e siècle, que je ne puis admettre les rapprochements faits dernièrement, dans les 'Novitates Zoologicae,' et que je ne cesserai de douter de la présence passée de ce soi-disant Ibis en Suisse qu'alors qu'on en aura trouvé des ossements ou restes fossiles dans le pays. Je vous en écris, à part, plus longuement.

Pour ce qui concerne la nichée ou reproduction en Suisse de la Bécassine double (*Gallinago major*) et de la Bécassine sourde (*G. gallinula*), vous n'êtes pas le premier qui ait douté de la possibilité de leur reproduction en Europe moyenne. On n'admet pas sans conteste des exceptions flagrantes à des règles que l'on a l'habitude de considérer comme établies et jusqu'à un certain point invariables. Moi-même, je partageais votre scepticisme jusqu'au moment où celui-ci a été fortement ébranlé par les assertions réitérées de plusieurs ornithologistes compétents et chasseurs sérieux de différentes parties du pays.

J'ai, pour *Gallinago major*, quatre citations manuscrites de nichées en Suisse, sauf une, peut-être sujette à caution, toutes dans les parties orientales du pays, dans la région du lac de Constance ou dans le bas de la vallée du Rhin, au-dessus de celui-ci, dans les marais et environs de Zizers, en particulier.—Fut le Colonel H. de Salys, excellent ornithologiste et bon observateur, dans son "System. geordnete Uebersicht der Vögel Graubündens" (Jahresb. der naturf. Gesell. Graubündens, N. F., viii. Jahrg. 1861-62), écrivait même : la *Telmatias major* se trouve d'avril à novembre dans le Rheinthal. Après cela, j'ai cru pouvoir dire : elle nicherait (soit, elle niche dit-on) de temps à autre dans le bas de la vallée du Rhin.

Relativement à la nidification de *Gallinago gallinula*, j'ai huit données manuscrites, moitié de chasseurs dignes de foi, moitié d'ornithologistes compétents, plus deux citations imprimées d'auteurs de toute confiance.—En disant que l'espèce niche çà et là à l'Ouest, au Centre et à l'Est, dans le pays, je n'ai évidemment pas voulu parler d'une multiplication régulière de la Bécassine sourde en Suisse, mais bien de nichées, suivant les localités, rares ou exceptionnelles. Cependant, de Salys (*l. c.*) écrivait, en 1861, que la *Telmatias gallinula* se montrait dans le Rheinthal de mars à novembre.

Mon père même, J. G. Fatio-Beaumont, dans son "Verzeichniss der Vögel welche sich im Thale von Genf und an den Seiten der dasselbe einschliessenden Berge finden"

(‘Naumannia,’ vi. no. 12, p. 167), considérait, en 1856, la *Gallinago gallinula* comme oiseau nicheur (Brutvogel) dans le bassin du Léman, où elle demeure quelquefois aussi en hiver. Les îlots de l’Arve et les marécages avoisinants, près de Gaillard, non loin de Genève, sont particulièrement cités comme lieux de nichée éventuelle, dans les notes manuscrites père.

Baldamus, traducteur de l’article de ce dernier dans la ‘Naumannia,’ en 1856, en note au bas de la première page, exprimait alors son étonnement, en face de nichées signalées en Suisse des Faucons émérillons, Hibou brachyote, et Bécassine sourde, se demandant s’il était possible que ces espèces puissent nicher vraiment tellement au Sud. Il ne connaissait pas l’attraction déconcertante que peut exercer le voisinage des Alpes sur certains oiseaux septentrionaux, soit hivernants, soit attardés au printemps.

Il me semble que ces quelques données viennent corroborer plus ou moins, pour les deux Bécassines en question, diverses observations faites en d’autres pays, en Allemagne, par exemple, et dans le Tyrol, même dans le nord de l’Italie, plus au Sud.

Pour ce qui est de la Maubèche, *Tringa canutus*, la remarque concernant une prétendue citation par moi de nidification en Suisse repose uniquement sur une confusion ou une erreur de lecture, car (vol. ii. part. 2, p. 977, lignes 15 & 16), en parlant de la représentation et des agissements de l’espèce en Suisse, j’ai péremptoirement dit : *elle séjourne généralement peu dans le pays et je ne crois pas qu’elle niche dans nos régions* *.

Un mot, enfin, à propos de la *Tringa temmincki* ; car, je serais mal venu de vouloir défendre mon dire de nidification de ce petit Bécasseau en Angleterre, en face des doutes émis à cet égard par l’auteur de l’excellent Manuel des Oiseaux d’Angleterre, mon savant contradicteur. Je ne suis plus là, en effet, dans mon champ d’exploration, tandis que M. H. Saunders est au contraire sur son propre terrain.

* [This was a *lapsus calami*, for which apologies are offered to Dr. Fatio.—H. S.]

Il est bien possible que j'aie tort et lui raison, dans le cas particulier, et qu'il y ait là, en effet, une erreur sur la quelle je remercie mon honorable collègue d'avoir bien voulu attirer mon attention.

Report on the British Museum for 1904-5 *.—The Parliamentary Report on the progress of the British Museum for the year 1904-5 contains the following passages concerning the Bird-department of the Natural History Museum at South Kensington, in which we are all much interested :—

The remounting (for the Public Gallery) of the Hoopoes, Colies, Trogons, Touracos, Toucans, Honey-guides, and Woodpeckers has been completed. The pier-cases containing the British Birds in the Pavilion have been re-arranged, and a number of specimens have been replaced by new and well-mounted ones. An illustrated guide to the Bird-Gallery is now issued to the public (*cf.* 'Ibis,' 1905, p. 486). Progress has been made with the osteological collection, and a large number of eggs have been registered and incorporated. The skeletons of the remaining Coraciiformes, viz., the Hornbills, Toucans, and Woodpeckers, have been labelled, catalogued, and placed in cabinets, also those of the Momotidæ and Eurylæmidæ.

The total number of accessions to the Class Aves during the year was 17,903, of which the following deserve special notice :—

Thirty-four Birds and fifty-one eggs from Darjeeling; presented by Mr. B. B. Osmaston.

Three hundred and thirty-one Birds from Upper Burma, including the types of a new species (*Pomatorhinus mearsi*); presented by Captain A. Mears.

Four hundred and ninety-seven Birds from the Malay Peninsula, including the type of a new Bulbul (*Pycnonotus robinsoni*); presented by the Royal Society and the Universities of Edinburgh and Liverpool.

* For the previous Report see 'Ibis,' 1904, p. 667.

One thousand Birds and one hundred and fifty-four eggs from Fohkien, China; presented by Mr. C. B. Rickett.

Eighty Birds from the Moluccas, including examples of sixteen species new to the collection, collected by N. Kühn; purchased.

One hundred and sixteen Birds from New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, collected by Mr. A. Meek; purchased.

Sixty-one Birds from Mindanao and Waigiou, collected by Mr. J. Waterstradt; purchased.

Sixty Birds from the Atlas Mountains, including the types of three new species (*Parus atlus*, *Motacilla subpersonata*, and *Cotile mauritanica*); presented by Mr. E. G. B. Meade-Waldo.

Three hundred and fifty-six Birds from the Azores, collected by Mr. W. R. Ogilvie-Grant, including the types of three new subspecies (*Turdus merula azorensis*, *Sturnus vulgaris granti*, and *Columba palumbus azoricus*); presented by the Hon. Walter Rothschild.

Six hundred and twenty-seven Birds from Cameroon, including the types of two new species (*Dryotriorchis batesi* and *Cypselus batesi*), collected by Mr. G. L. Bates; purchased.

Four hundred and seventy-two Birds from Sierra Leone, including the type of a new species (*Amaurocichla kempii*), collected by Mr. Robin Kemp; purchased.

Twenty-five birds' skeletons from the Gambia; presented by Dr E. Hopkinson.

Three hundred and seventy-eight Birds and fourteen skeletons from Fernando Po, including the types of three new species (*Pholidornis bedfordi*, *Cypselus sladene*, and *Haplopelia seimundi*), collected by E. Seimund; presented by Mrs. Percy Sladen, the Duke of Bedford, and the Hon. Walter Rothschild.

Four hundred and twenty-seven Birds and eggs from the Orange River Colony and British Bechuanaland, collected by Messrs. R. B. Woosnam and R. E. Dent; purchased.

Six hundred and thirty Birds from the Upper Nile and

Abyssinia, collected by P. Zaphiro; presented by Mr. Y. Macmillan.

Five hundred and eighty-seven Birds from Uganda; purchased.

Four hundred and five Birds from Uganda, including the types of two new species (*Francolinus mulemæ* and *Mesobucco radcliffei*); presented by Colonel C. Delmé Radcliffe.

Eleven Birds from British East Africa, including the types of three new species (*Cyanomitra alinae*, *Haplopetia jacksoni*, and *Macronyx sharpei*); presented by Mr. F. J. Jackson, C.B.

Forty-one Birds from British East Africa; presented by Captain R. E. Drake-Brockman.

One hundred and two Birds from British East Africa and from Florida; presented by Mr. C. B. Storey.

Four hundred and eighty-three Birds from the West Indies, collected by Dr. R. Bowdler Sharpe during the voyage of the 'Emerald'; presented by Sir Frederick Johnstone, Bart., and Laura, Countess of Wilton.

One hundred and twenty-two eggs from Costa Rica, collected by Mr. C. F. Underwood; purchased.

Four hundred and sixty-five Birds and eggs from Paraguay, collected by Mr. W. Foster; purchased.

Fifty-five Birds from New Zealand, the Kermadec and other Antarctic Islands, including specimens of *Mergus australis* and other rare species; presented by the Earl of Ranfurly.

Four hundred and thirty-seven Birds collected by Mr. M. J. Nicoll during the voyage of the 'Valhalla'; presented by the Earl of Crawford, K.T., F.R.S.

Two eggs of the Kagu (*Rhinochetus jubatus*); purchased.

Expedition to Mount Ruwenzori.—An expedition for the further geographical and biological exploration of Mount Ruwenzori in the Uganda Protectorate, arranged in the Ornithological Department of the British Museum, left England in September last. It is conducted by Mr. R. B. Woosnam, late of the Worcester Regiment, with whom are

associated Mr. R. E. Dent, late of the same regiment, the Hon. Gerald Legge, M.B.O.U., and Mr. A. F. R. Wollaston as Medical Officer. Mr. Douglas Carruthers accompanies them as Taxidermist. The party will proceed to Mombasa and take the railway and steamer across Lake Victoria to Entebbe. Thence they will probably go by land direct to Ruwenzori and select a convenient spot as the basis of their operations.

Expedition to the Galapagos.—We learn from 'The Condor' (vol. vii. p. 148) that a new expedition was sent by the Californian Academy of Sciences, during the past summer, to the Galapagos Islands, to be absent nineteen months. The expedition was organised through the efforts of the Director of the Museum, Mr. Leverett Mills Loomis, who has spared neither time nor pains to bring it to a successful conclusion. The personnel includes Mr. R. H. Beck (Chief), Messrs. E. W. Gifford and J. S. Hunter (birds and mammals), Mr. A. W. Stewart (plants), Messrs. J. R. Stevin and Ernest King (reptiles), and other collectors. They go in a two-masted schooner-yacht, purchased from the Navy Department, and the equipment is stated to include practically everything that such an expedition can possibly need.

The members will make special efforts to secure a very complete collection of birds, while their long stay in the Islands will enable them to ascertain many biological facts of importance, as well as to gather data concerning temperature and rainfall, and the effects of these on distribution. They will probably visit Socorro, Cocos, and other Pacific Islands on the route out.

Meeting of the South-African Ornithologists' Union.—The second Annual Meeting of the S. A. O. U. was held in the Transvaal Technical Institute at Johannesburg on August 30th, 1905, at 5 P.M. Mr. W. L. Sclater, M.A., F.Z.S. (President), was in the Chair, and a number of

Members were present. Dr. P. L. Selater, F.R.S., Mr. A. H. Evans, M.A., F.Z.S., and Mr. A. Trevor-Battye, M.A., F.Z.S., all Members of the B. O. U., were present. The Secretary, Mr. A. K. Haagner, read the Annual Report, which shewed that the Membership now amounted to 80, and that satisfactory progress had been made. The Report was adopted.

Twenty-one new Members were elected. The following Officers were then elected for the ensuing year:—*President*, W. L. Selater, M.A., F.Z.S., M.B.O.U.; *Vice-Presidents*, Dr. J. W. B. Gunning, F.Z.S., and Professor Duerden; *Hon. Secretary*, A. K. Haagner, F.Z.S., M.B.O.U.; *Hon. Treasurer*, H. O. Collett; *Council*, L. E. Taylor, M.B.O.U. (Transvaal), John Wood (Cape Colony), J. G. Hatchard, F.R.A.S. (Orange River Colony), A. D. Millar, Col.M.B.O.U. (Natal), and G. A. K. Marshall, F.Z.S. (Rhodesia).

Dr. Selater, F.R.S., one of the original Members of the B. O. U., who is an Honorary Member of the S. A. O. U., congratulated the Union on the success which had attended its first year's operations and impressed upon Members the necessity of founding Museums and of making collections of local fauna (birds in particular) a prominent feature of them.—[A. K. II.]

The Extinct Penguins of Antarctica.—Dr. Nordenskjöld has already announced the discovery of the remains of some extinct species of Penguins in the Eocene formation of Seymour Island during the sojourn of the Swedish Antarctic Expedition in that part of the South-polar Seas. These remains have now been carefully studied by Mr. Carl Wyman, who describes the results in a recently published part of the 'Wissenschaftliche Ergebnisse der Schwedischen Südpolar-Expedition' (Band iii. Lief. i.). It appears that the Eocene Penguins deviated in some remarkable points of structure from those of the present day and must be referred to new genera, which are named *Anthropornis*, *Delphinornis*, *Ichthyopteryx*, and *Eospheniscus*. Of these *Anthropornis nordenskjöldi* is shown to have been considerably larger than the existing Emperor Penguin (*Aptenodytes forsteri*).